THE HOMELESS AND THE HOUSED

—John Cogley

THE

Commonweal

Migratory Workers

by Archbishop Robert E. Lucey

The Mythology of Anti-Americanism

by Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn

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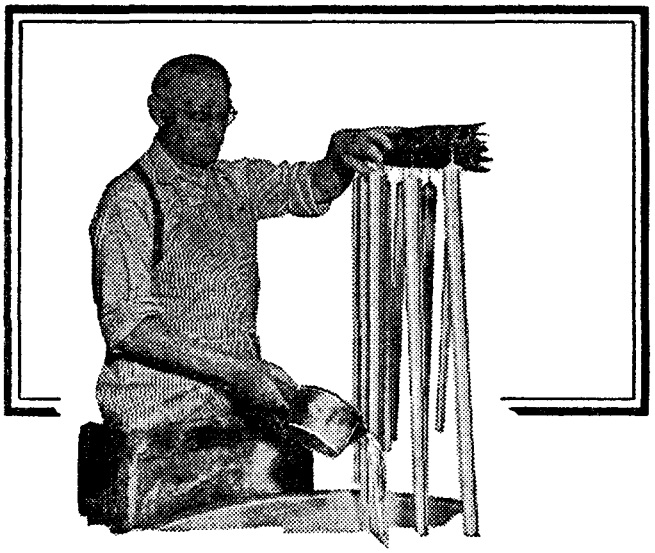

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THIS WEEK

Week by Week 367

Migratory Workers
by Archbishop Robert E. Lucey 370

The Mythology of Anti-Americanism
by Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn 373

The Homeless and the Housed
by John Cogley 377

The Stage
by Richard Hayes 378

Communications 379

Of Note 381

Books 383

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THE
Commonweal
week by week

BIPARTISANSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

UNDER the United States Constitution primary responsibility for initiating and conducting the nation's foreign affairs rests with the President. This is a responsibility which he cannot abdicate, delegate, or even, ultimately, share. Before the bar of history he must himself answer for the success or failure of the nation's foreign policy during his administration. It therefore seems true that in foreign affairs, more than in other areas, the only good President is a strong President: the price of weakness here can be terrible for the nation and for the world.

But responsibility does not mean arbitrary power. Though the President cannot share his burdens finally, he must share them along the way. He can consult his advisers in the making of foreign policy decisions and he can seek to persuade the Congress in his effort to implement them. The success or failure of his policies will indeed frequently depend as much on the President's powers of persuasion as on their intrinsic worth, for though the Executive proposes in America's foreign affairs, it is the legislature which disposes. Without Congressional understanding and cooperation no foreign policy is possible at all.

President Eisenhower has demonstrated an admirable awareness of this fact during his first year in office. Warned, perhaps, by the continual battles which his predecessor waged with Congress, he has been careful, at every step along the way, to consult with Congressional leaders, to advise them of his intentions and to enlist their support in advance of submitting his proposals. This, in itself, has been an encouraging sign of a return to reason in our national life.

The recent conferences between the President and Republican Congressional leaders, for example, have been more than good politics; they have been sound policy. And the President's invitation to the Democratic opposition to consult with him over his forthcoming program has seemed more than good politics too; it has seemed to be a genuine attempt at bipartisanship in the only sense in which bipartisanship can have meaning within the American Constitutional system: the President made his decisions—after consultation with his own party—alone. He then attempted to persuade the opposition, by whatever arguments he could muster, to support his decisions for the good of the country, to share his responsibility along the way. The total picture here has seemed one of enlightened government in action.

THE next step belongs to the President's opposition—in both parties. Adlai Stevenson has given the Democrats a motto: never to oppose merely for opposition's sake. If they will adhere to this motto, and if those Republican Congressmen in whom the habit of opposition has grown bitter and deep can mend their ways, then the enactment of a constructive program during the new session of Congress may be possible. Unfortunately, grave obstacles remain in its way.

The most serious of these obstacles are a result of Mr. Eisenhower's apparent reluctance during his first year in office to exercise adequately the responsibility which was his. Recent evidence that he will exercise it effectively in the future does not make the fruits of past inaction any the less bitter.

A fundamental misunderstanding seemed to plague President Eisenhower's first year in office: a confusion of the Presidency of the United States with the symbolic aloofness of the British Monarch. Mr. Eisenhower's reluctance to enter into "controversy," his determination to remain aloof from "politics," his apparent willingness to suffer the most irresponsible elements in the Republican Party gladly, led, finally, to a deterioration of his own bright image. They encouraged opposition for the sake of opposition and made bipartisanship increasingly difficult. For while the President foreswore "politics," others in his party did not, and such episodes as the Brownell incident may permanently have alienated many Democrats from the Eisenhower leadership.

Responsibility, like bipartisanship, is a two-way

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street. In the President's long reluctance to act effectively, the irresponsibles in his party took heart. The President now seems prepared to assert himself, to act as leader of his country through his party. This provides a new hope. In it a genuine bipartisanship should again be possible.

RECESSION PROSPECT

WHY is it that the sustained prosperity of the United States is universally held to be of such paramount importance for the defenses of the free world? During the Marshall Plan period one reason was obvious enough, and even today this nation's ability to supply military aid abroad is of the essence. American prosperity has long been a target of Soviet propaganda; year after year the leaders in the Kremlin have been banking on the chance and promising others that another big American depression was just around the corner. Evidence of severe foreign repercussions was provided when a slight recession in 1949 here had proportionately much sharper repercussions on European exports. Nations supplying raw materials for American industry and those supplying goods imported for American consumers are understandably apprehensive.

Present fears abroad about the American recession of 1954 tend to lie in this latter area. And the British further fear that if the decline in our economy should become severe enough, it would lead to serious speculation against the pound sterling. In general the morale of the Allied defenses is closely bound up with American prosperity.

Appropriately enough, there has recently been much meeting and discussion among American economists on the national business prospect. Agreement as to the immediate outlook is all but unanimous. Even the individual estimates for the impending decline from last year's all-time national production record vary only slightly. The nation's leading economists virtually are one, however, in refusing to make ironclad predictions that a real depression is not eventually forthcoming. This despite social security and other built-in New Deal protections against a recurrence of 1929.

If plenty of Government economists were all that were required to bring things to a better pass, there would appear to be little cause for anxiety. Seldom, if ever before, has an American President had the assistance of so many outstanding economic advisers. Recession has been foreseen, remedial steps taken and prepared. There is considerable substance behind the promises the President made, January fourth, that he and his advisers stand in readiness "with every legitimate means" to sustain our prosperity. But to what extent will Congress make use of these considered recommendations? Mr. Eisenhower is encountering the most stubborn resistance, for example, against "setting aside" some twenty to thirty per cent of our defense contracts for areas where severe unemployment is growing.

The controversy here is not a matter of partisan politics but of sectional interest. The New England textile industry has been hit hard. Senator Knowland of California and several Southern senators from the Democratic South are opposing vigorously a "set aside" directive of November fourth supported by the President, which will provide considerable employment in critical areas in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

It would be ironical indeed if our Government were to have amassed more knowledge about the national economy and the business cycle than ever before in our history,only to set much of it at naught for lack of political vision on the part of powerful legislative representatives of sectional interests.

NEXT WEEK

JOHN A. LUKACS discusses the nature of Totalitarianism, whose appeal in the twentieth century "rose out of the deficiencies of the Age of Reason."

"In our century, Catholicism stands accused of being too rigid, too authoritarian, too disciplinary, clinging to traditions of an outmoded past. But this is the same perception which, foolishly enough, views the totalitarians, and especially those of the 'Right' (in itself an outmoded categorization), as super-'reactionaries'; whereas the opposite is true. And thus the full paradox emerges that the Roman Catholic Church will ultimately stand in the way of all totalitarians, including National Socialists, precisely because of its ancient principles, traditions and 'reactionary' skepticism."

THE BIG FOUR MEETING

BERLIN will not only be the location of the Big Four meeting: it will be a symbol of the central problem on the agenda. The meeting will provide an opportunity for the West to test, for the first time, the real temper of the new Soviet regime. And speculation over whether the Soviets seek "cold peace" in order to solve internal difficulties, or whether they are unchanged, will be settled by their actions in the divided city.

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There are two points which could test Soviet intentions, one of which, the Eisenhower plan for pooling atomic power, is now on the agenda at Berlin. But the chief question will be that of the fate of Germany in the cold war.

The Russians recently have talked nostalgically of Potsdam, and implied that Berlin might serve as a renewal of the spirit of Potsdam. Unfortunately for such nostalgia, there exists in Europe today a force which did not exist in the days of Potsdam: a powerful and independent West German Federal Republic.

All such schemes for disposing of European problems through quadripartite negotiations ignore the existence of a Germany which has its own aspirations, and its own means for realizing those aspirations: a Germany which has the largest population in continental Europe, the greatest coal and steel production, and the largest volume of foreign trade.

The solution proposed for divided Germany is unification, with or without neutralization. The possibility of neutralizing the dynamic, Western-oriented Federal Republic is too faint to be considered. And the possibility of Germany's being forced into unification on any but democratic terms is unthinkable. A Russian surrender of East Germany is the remaining possibility; if that happened, it would mean that there has been an upheaval in Russian policy-making—an unlikely supposition.

If one sets aside the possibility of upheavals, then, one is back at the beginning. What is left is a Berlin Conference which will be a testing, a feeling out of new opponents, at most a duel of psychological warfare. This could be dangerous, but might also be useful in telling us something of the new Russian leadership. At best, we can expect a stalemate in which the opponents better understand one another. At worst, we may expect the Soviets successfully to exploit the splits in the Western bloc. What we ought not expect is a real solution to the German problem, or sadly enough, any material change in the cold war.

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

THE election of M. René Coty to the Presidency of the French Republic was a bright conclusion to the darkest week in the history of the Fourth Republic. The long debate at Versailles was not, in itself, a matter of the greatest consequence, but it served as a dramatization of the *malaise* of the French government, and as a profound shock to the increasingly disturbed French public. The nation's underlying weakness was displayed to the world; this in a year when the unity of Britain received a parallel dramatization in the Coronation of Elizabeth.

M. Coty, seventy-one, is a former senator. From a Protestant family, he is married to a Catholic, and has held a comparable political position, neither anti-clerical nor wholly pro-Catholic. A man of the Right, he was subject to none of the political enmities which compromised the other conservative candidates for the Presidency. In the Senate he was chairman of the federalist group and a deputy member of the Strasbourg European Assembly. Thus he is an active supporter of European integration, although his position on EDC is unknown. (While the President of the Republic has very limited power directly to influence government policy, his position above the parties gives him a considerable amount of indirect influence on the course of French affairs.)

But what is most significant about the election of M. Coty is that he is an authority on constitutional law, and has been active in the attempt to restore executive authority to the French government. If France's internal divisions on class and party lines are beyond healing, then the only hope lies in a constitutional reform which would reduce the paralyzing negative influence the Assembly now holds over the Executive. During the coming year France will have to deal with the climax of the eight-year-old war in Indochina. She will have the choice of truce on Communist terms, which would mean a Communist Indochina in a matter of months, or a bloody forcing of the issue. France will have to take some measures of internal economic reform. She will have to make her decision on EDC.

Each of these issues requires a decision of enormous consequence; none will decently be solved by compromise or postponement. Nerve and leadership are required, and it would seem that they can only be mustered through some form of constitutional reform. If constitutional lawyer Coty can use the influence of his new office to forward these reforms, then his election may prove to have been a milestone.

An announcement of The Commonweal's 30th Anniversary essay contest for college and university undergraduates on the subject of "The Catholic in a Democratic Society," together with rules for entry, will be found on page 382 of this issue. Essays must be submitted by April 15, 1954. The winning essay will be published in The Commonweal, and its author will receive a prize of one thousand dollars.

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Migratory Workers

EMPLOYERS' GREED, POWER POLITICS, EXPLOITATION, CHILD LABOR, AND GENERAL NEGLECT HAVE PRODUCED A SITUATION WHICH IS THE SCANDAL OF THE WORLD.

✠ ROBERT E. LUCEY

FOR half a century reports have been written about migratory labor but not very much has been done about it. The problems of migratory workers are many and serious. No single solution to these problems is possible, but a great deal can be done, and must be done, for these displaced persons. Most of them are American citizens; some are Mexican nationals working here on contract; others are illegal aliens, generally known as "wetbacks."

In American industry the working people to some extent are organized; they have a voice and a vote in their government and in their jobs. They have raised their own standards of living and that of millions of fellow workers who are unorganized. They are a stable, substantial segment of American life. But in agriculture the non-migratory laborers who work in the county of their residence are for the most part unorganized. The vast majority of those who are migrants, wandering from county to county and from state to state during the harvest season, must take what they get in the matter of wages, hours of labor and conditions of work. The wetbacks, of course, are utterly defenseless in the labor market. This lack of organization among workers in agriculture is a great misfortune for them, a temptation to injustice on the part of many employers and a weak spot in the American economy.

So far as the workers are concerned, whether farm hands or migrants, it is doubtless true to say that many of them are treated with some measure of justice by farmers, ranchers and growers. But the income of agricultural labor is decidedly below that of industrial labor with due regard to differences in the cost of living.

The lot of the migrant is worse than that of the farm hand with steady employment in one place. In the case of the migrant there is great uncertainty about wages, housing, hours of work, weather, health, transportation and even employment itself. In a bad year many a migratory family comes home dead broke. Even when weather and crops are favorable there may be labor surpluses in many areas and consequent unemployment for some.

Conditions in this segment of agriculture are chaotic. Workers are attracted to certain areas by radio announcements, newspaper ads, grapevine information, rumors and advice from the employment services. If American industry got its employees in that fashion the whole country would be in chaos. It is true that labor recruiters and crew captains deliver workers to employers, but they cannot control either the weather or the crops. It is also true that this whole thing is seasonal and temporary, but there need not be so much hopeless disorder. The federal government, state governments, employers associations and labor unions ought to cooperate to put order into this situation.

Congress has shamefully disregarded the needs and the rights of American citizens in the migratory labor force. These workingmen and women and children are making a tremendous contribution to our economy at great personal sacrifice. One shudders to think of their sacrifices—absence from home as much as six months of the year; precarious employment, low annual wages; little or no education for the children; housing that may be fair, poor, unspeakable or just the shade of a tree; constant moving from one place to another; long hours of stoop labor even for women and children; abominable health conditions, meager food and often no sanitation; lack of priests who speak their language and lack of churches easily available.

WHY should any sane man take his wife and children on such an adventure? The old Romans had a saying which went: *Primum est vivere*—the first thing to do is to live; if you can't survive you are finished. The migratory laborer has to work to live. He is unskilled in the ways of industry and turns to agriculture. All the jobs in his area may be taken by Mexican nationals working on contract or by wetbacks. The American citizen has no alternative but to seek employment elsewhere. The Mexican national may be paid fifty cents an hour, with a shack to live in; the wetback will work for twenty to thirty cents an hour and live in the brush. An American family, regardless of low living standards, cannot survive on fifty cents an hour.

Most Rev. Robert E. Lucey is the Archbishop of San Antonio.

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More than two hundred thousand Mexican nationals are brought into our country every year to work in agriculture because the farmers and growers claim that they cannot get domestic workers to harvest the crops. The work is seasonal, and the laborers must be available promptly to bring in the harvest. The Employment Service may not certify a shortage of labor unless sufficient domestic workers who are able, willing and qualified are not available at the time and place needed to perform the work. That word "willing" is the key to the situation. If a substantial number of American agricultural laborers in a given area are not willing to work for starvation wages, they create a labor shortage in that area and alien workers may then be brought in.

The Mexican national, here on contract, is supposed to be paid fifty cents an hour or the "prevailing wage," whichever is greater. During hearings held by the President's Commission on Migratory Labor the question was sometimes asked: "How do you discover the prevailing wage?" The method described was interesting. Some growers in a given area would get together and decide what wage they would pay. That was then the prevailing wage. Some growers claim that fifty cents an hour is too high and they don't like laws which interfere with human liberty. There was a time when the Supreme Court of the United States held that a minimum wage law was unconstitutional because it violated liberty of contract. Some growers still believe that to pay starvation wages is a natural right.

The international contract agreed upon by our government and that of Mexico not only stipulated a minimum wage but had certain requirements regarding housing, health, unemployment and death. No such safeguards are granted to American migratory workers. The Congress of the United States, aided and abetted by certain powerful growers' associations, has seen to it that native-born American citizens in the migratory labor force have not even a minimum of protection by social legislation. It is passing strange that a little group of wilful men can so sway the Congress of the United States.

IF AMERICAN citizens receive such harsh treatment, pity the poor wetback. American migrants can be exploited, defrauded and subjected to every manner of injustice but they cannot be deported; the illegal alien must keep a sharp lookout for the Immigration Service in the Department of Justice.

The growers who like foreign slave labor, even when their own fellow citizens are unemployed, can concoct a rather persuasive argument for their iniquity. After all, these illegal aliens are human beings and children of God. They are creatures of marvelous dignity and sublime destiny. They are good workers, honest, faithful and docile. Many of them are married men who seek only to support themselves and their families. Work is scarce in Mexico and wages in agriculture are pitifully low. By working twelve to fourteen hours a day in Texas at twenty cents an hour their income is much better than it would be in their homeland. They save their money and send most of it back to Mexico to support their families in decent and frugal comfort as becomes these honest working people. And, anyhow, Americans won't do stoop labor; they aspire to something higher.

Thus the grower becomes, in a small way, a benefactor of humanity—generous, upright and benevolent. After all, this is a free country and a man may hire whom he chooses. The fact that the employee is here illegally is a mere coincidence; he is still a man with all the rights and needs inherent in his nature. He must work to live. The grower wants to help him.

Plenty of people in our country do not see the sophistry of these excuses which are offered to hide crimes of greed and injustice. Surely it is not necessary to declare that we subscribe unreservedly to the proposition that all men are created in the image of God. The illegal alien has our sympathy, our prayers and our hopes for a better future, but citizens who serve their country in peace and war, who pay taxes and build our schools and churches, have a prior right to employment when it is available.

Recently the writer spoke to a rural pastor about the small debt on his parish and asked if some of it could not be paid off every year. The pastor explained that his men were out of work because of a wetback invasion. Asked if he could not get a public official, perhaps the mayor, to remove these illegal workers, the pastor replied: "The mayor? He has fifty wetbacks on his ranch."

Business men also suffer from these conditions. Citizens who live in rural areas cannot patronize stores and business houses when they have no income. The wetback does not dare to shop in the town; his simple needs can be supplied at the commissary on the ranch and if he is charged exorbitant prices that is too bad for him. And if the employer refuses to give him his wages at the end of his service that is also too bad but he has no recourse because he is a fugitive.

HUMANLY speaking, the hiring of wetbacks is smart business. If a cotton grower in California or Arizona pays five dollars per hundredweight to cotton pickers and a grower in the Rio Grande Valley pays a dollar and a half for the same work he has an obvious economic advantage. Perhaps this grower doesn't know, or doesn't care, that in one year as many as sixty-five thousand workers have left South Texas to labor in seasonal agriculture in other states because they couldn't find jobs with decent wages at home.

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Counting women and children, this army numbered at least one hundred and fifty thousand persons. Not a few parishes in our jurisdiction are pretty well emptied out by these departures, many of which extend from April to November.

Our concern is largely with the Spanish-speaking migrants of the Southwest, but we are aware that tens of thousands of white and colored migrants from the deep South make their way North every year to harvest crops in the Eastern and Northeastern States. They too suffer the hardships and the heartaches of migratory labor in American agriculture.

Last year the Mexican Hierarchy requested the Archbishop of Guadalajara to contact the writer to learn if a program might be worked out to give more general spiritual care to Mexican migrants in the United States. It was suggested that priests from Mexico might labor among these people in the dioceses where they are employed in large numbers. American Bishops have made great sacrifices to supply Spanish-speaking priests for these migratory workers during the harvest season but many difficulties stood in the way.

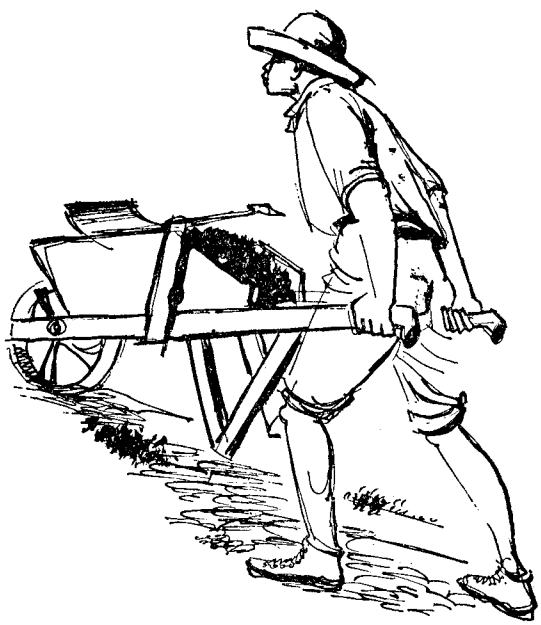
The proposal that Mexican priests come to this country to work among Catholic migrants was referred to the American Hierarchy at their annual meeting and approved. Fortunately machinery was available in Texas to effectuate the plan. Eight years ago the Bishops' Committee for the Spanish Speaking was set up, of which all the Bishops of the Southwest are members. They maintain a Regional Office for the Spanish-speaking supported by an annual grant from the American Board of Catholic Missions. During the past two years the office has been in Austin, Texas, and has now moved for a period of two years to Houston.

The staff of the Regional Office was delegated to head up the "Operation Migratory Labor" on this side of the border and a priest in the social action office in Mexico City was appointed our liaison officer by the Mexican Hierarchy. The American Bishops who needed Mexican missionaries were contacted to learn how many priests they would need and the period of time when their services would be required. Then the search for priests in Mexico began and continued for several months. Despite the scarcity of clergymen there, the Bishops and Religious Superiors allocated twenty-four priests to this adventure in international cooperation for the welfare of souls. They came from six dioceses in Mexico and four religious provinces.

The Regional Office received excellent cooperation from the State Department in Washington, the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the Department of Justice, Mexican Consulates in the United States, the Department of Immigration, N.C.W.C., and the United States Ambassador to Mexico. The details of this operation were almost countless but the staff of the Regional Office carried on valiantly.

Arrived at their destination in a diocese of one of the Northern states, the missionaries found themselves strangers in a strange land. Their own people were out in the fields, however, and to the fields they went to minister to them. Mass was said wherever possible, confessions were heard and Holy Communion distributed. Marriages and baptisms were arranged through local pastors. The Word of God was preached to the people in their own language.

The American Bishops who welcomed these missionaries to their dioceses for temporary service during the harvest season deserve special mention for their zeal and generosity. They paid transportation costs by air from Mexico City and return, board and lodging, travel expenses through the rural areas and a generous honorarium to the priests. They were happy to do this for their guests, both clergy and laity. The problems are immense. In one diocese twelve thousand Spanish-



speaking migrants move in for about three months. Their spiritual and religious welfare is not easy to achieve.

The Church is doing all that she can for her migratory children but the civil authority has been negligent. Among several major recommendations of the President's Commission on Migratory Labor this one is central: that the Congress should pass legislation establishing a Federal Committee for Migratory Labor to study the problems involved, work with state legislatures, farmers' associations, labor unions and private organizations and make recommendations to Congress for necessary legislation to bring order into this chaotic segment of American agriculture. The present situation, characterized by the greed of some employers, power politics, exploitation of defenseless workers, child labor, utter neglect and senseless disorder, is an international scandal.

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These migratory workers are making a tremendous contribution to the nation by harvesting much of the food and fiber that we need in peace and war. States, counties and local communities should be grateful to them for their services and pay more attention to their temporal needs. Many of them are American citizens, all of them are human beings; they are a gentle, generous and lovable people.

One of our Sister-Catechists was recently talking to a family that had just returned to San Antonio from the North. For several Sundays they found themselves seventeen miles from the nearest church. Father and mother loaded the children into an old jalopy and drove over bad roads to Mass. In the evening they made the journey again to say the rosary in church with their Spanish-speaking friends. I wonder how many English-speaking folks who look down on these poor and humble people would drive a dilapidated car thirty-four miles on Sunday morning over rough roads to assist at Mass and drive another thirty-four miles in the evening to say the family rosary in a wayside chapel.

To defraud and exploit such people is indeed reprehensible.

A NEW LOOK

The Mythology of Anti-Americanism

ERIK VON KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN

AS a young man in Austria, like most of my friends, I believed that America was a "new nation" of "healthy young barbarians" who hated the past and were concerned only with the future. I really believed that the U.S. had turned over a new page in history; that Americans lived a purely technological existence; that they were people without reverence, piety or honor; that all their law courts without exception were a travesty of justice (shadows of Sacco and Vanzetti!); that they were sex-obsessed and worshipped only the "almighty dollar"; that they had a classless society and actually *lived* in skyscrapers fifty stories high; that they were bare of human sentiments; that Aimee Semple McPherson was the last word in American religious life and the novels of Dashiell Hammett together with movies like "Scarface" truly represented the soul of soulless America.

It is true that young Europeans like me found American women (on the screen and in life) most beautiful, but according to a European superstition beautiful women are "heartless." There were also certain books which somewhat shook our anti-American convictions. I am not referring to Sinclair Lewis' *Babbitt* or *Mainstreet* or to Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* or Faulkner's *Sanctuary,* but to the works of Henry Adams, Willa Cather and Thornton Wilder. The fact that American Catholicism was flourishing merely proved, in our minds, that Grace knows no boundaries. When, later, I came to America for a sojourn lasting a decade it took me several years to overcome my ingrained prejudices and to revise my picture of this nation, several years of extensive travel and observation, several years of carefully sifting views and opinions, of weighing evidence.

According to Simone de Beauvoir, America is one of the most myth-ridden countries under the sun. Why? I think the explanation lies in the fact that in tearing itself away from the mother country, the United States had to give new meaning to its separate existence. There were no other important nations nearby in whose mirror America could reflect itself; the almost miraculous growth of the country gave to it a sense of uniqueness; the arrival of millions from the Old World who sought a haven and a future provided the young nation with a feeling of an extraordinary significance and a sense of having been divinely chosen. Yet of more interest than the causes for the proliferation of the American myths is the nature of these myths themselves. Let us look at some of them.

There is, first of all, the myth of America as a "young nation." Americans, needless to say, are not a split second "younger" than Europeans. Obviously, they are not younger biologically; the chromosomes of those crossing the Atlantic did not experience a miraculous rejuvenation. Culturally Americans are not younger either. The sports editor of the *Kansas City Star* has precisely the same literary ancestors as the fashion editors of the *Sheffield Advertiser* or the *Birmingham Gazette,* namely the author of the Beowulf Saga, Chaucer, Donne and Shakespeare. The Greek-Roman

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Mr. Kuehnelt-Leddihn, an Austrian novelist and political writer, recently completed a series of lectures in the U.S.

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influence on the United States is probably much greater than it is on Denmark, Sweden or Norway. This, at least, is true as far as language, architecture, religion and education are concerned. New York is an older city than either Helsingfors or Leningrad; Chicago is older than Esbjerg or Wilhelmshaven; Boston existed before Karlsruhe; California and Texas were republics before Czechoslovakia, Rumania or Yugoslavia were even heard of. As far as paintings go, there are greater masterworks in the United States than in all of Northern Europe.

AS I am writing these lines, in a New England country house, I can see no picture, piece of furniture, wall paper, lamp or book-binding which does not betray in its forms or design our common origin. In the distance I can make out a small town, hardly grown since 1840. The harmony of the buildings, the profile of the church, the whole impression imparted by this settlement bears witness to the fact that we are here faced with a legitimate expression of Western civilization. It is true that other American towns are less happy in design and spirit, that they abound in tasteless architectural horrors. But were we in Europe any luckier in the second half of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries? The sterile ice-age of material prosperity wrought its ravages on both continents. There was French painting, of course; but Germany's Imperial period (aside from Wagner, Richard Strauss and Nietzsche) had not much originality of taste, art or thought; and Italy fared hardly better.

"Old" Europe and "young" America are of the same *basic* pattern. As a matter of fact, if there must be an argument about "age," it is perhaps Europe which is the younger of the two ("young" and "new" are by no means identical). The "youngest" forms of art are those of Mesopotamia, Egypt and China; the Parthenon is "later," that means "older" than Luxor; the Romanesque and Gothic styles look back on an even longer prehistory; the Renaissance and the Baroque "presuppose" their medieval forerunners, and the Chile-Haus in Hamburg, the Hochhaus in Vienna, the new building of Le Corbusier in Marseilles, Rockefeller Center and Lever House in New York truly stand at the *end* of a development. They may be "recent" as structures, but their forms are old. What, then, is lacking in America are the representations of "young" architectural art. Something analogous can be said of American literature. G. K. Chesterton has pointed out very shrewdly that neither Henry James nor Henry Adams can be called the writers of a nation of "healthy young barbarians."

Europeans misuse the words "American" and "Americanism." The latter expression especially is most unfortunate. An ism always denotes a fanatical narrowing down. (For this very reason the word "Catholicism" has no official standing in the Church.) To the Catholic theologian "Americanism" signifies a phantom-heresy, a label used for a religious deviation in American Catholicism which never existed but was only a brain-child of early anti-American feelings in Europe. To Americans at large, "Americanism" denotes a dynamic but very hazy mixture of nationalism,

patriotism and a whole score of natural virtues and political concepts which nobody yet can clearly distinguish from "Norwegianism" or "Switzerism." To the European, finally, *Amerikanismus* is the quintessence of American mythology which, unfortunately, the European accepts as reality—the combined evils of a lack of tradition, crass materialism, technology run amuck, collectivism and rampant capitalism. The American's popular notion that he has a monopoly on technical progress, hygiene and utilitarianism is thus taken over by the Europeans, who then come to identify America with modernity.

The equation of "modern" with "American" has an enormous fascination for the non-thinking, Europeans and Americans alike. No wonder then that in Europe we have the myth of a peaceful, conservative, old-fashioned, tradition-loving society which dreams of a return to the High Middle Ages and a bucolic, simple, agrarian life, but is prevented from doing so by the wicked Americans, who foist their Yankee cars, patent medicines, electrical appliances, steel-and-concrete buildings, infernal music, nylons and Sherman tanks on an unwilling Europe.

This is not being said, of course, in so many words; contradiction would be too easy. But it is constantly said by implication. The myth is alluded to in certain pseudo-conservative European writings; you will also find it in the propaganda of European Communists, who shed crocodile tears over the possibility of Char-

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tres' being destroyed by American blockbusters while they clean their hypodermic needles to make more bishops "confess."

Oddly enough, this myth of America, which is really the core of anti-Americanism, is zealously nurtured in the U.S. We find it in the poetry of Edgar A. Guest; we see its dim outline in Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee;* we perceive its faint smell in the lines of Whitman and Sandburg; we get it more concretely in the "Little King" of Soglow and in comics like "Smilin' Jack" and "Joe Palooka." It crops up in American senatorial addresses and civics courses, in commencement speeches and editorials. At the beginning of World War II *Life* and *Time* magazines carried an advertisement for General Electric which showed a miserable group of women in rags pulling a plow and telling the reader that all this was a common sight in Central Europe. This sort of thing fits in very well with the poem of Emma Lazarus adorning the Statue of Liberty which calls European immigrants ". . . the wretched refuse from your teeming shore."

THE truth is that America as well as Europe is responsible for the rise of technology and mass production, which represent a *human* problem that neither continent has really licked. If trade barriers were to be levelled in Europe, mass production for four hundred and fifty million customers would overshadow what the "New World" is doing now. The European charge that technology is a devilish American import which is dragging us into the gutter of soulless depersonalization would then look sillier than ever.

Yet behold the American either coming to Europe himself or greeting the European immigrant (or visitor) with the half-ironic, half-troubled demeanor of the "healthy young barbarian." Myths, after all, carry the obligation of individual or mass performance. I am thinking of the not so untypical American who reads good books, visits museums, subscribes to middlebrow periodicals and sports a collection of records with the best classical music, a man just as cultured as his European counterpart. Yet hardly is he face to face with his cousin from across the water, than he strikes the pose of the Man from the Moon. "America," he is likely to say, with an almost sadistic leer, "is a brand new country. We are the most informal people under the sun, real extroverts, and we worship the almighty dollar. You will marvel at our classless society. We respect nothing and merely live for the future. Art does not mean a thing to us but gadgets gladden our hearts. The Ford factory in River Rouge, the slaughterhouses in Chicago, the skyscrapers in New York are the highlights of our civilization. We lead no family lives; we have dropped all religious prejudices and are leading an existence of unfettered individualism. Conservatism and tradition in our country are dead as a doornail. America—that's the permanent revolution."

And an average European who saves every penny to buy a motor-scooter, who has not yet paid the last installment on his radio, who belongs to a political party ready to overthrow his government and to root out all memories of the past, may completely agree. He has accepted the Great American Myth, which is nothing by the reverse of the Great European Myth (U.S. edition).

Yet these two pieces of mythology—myth and counter-myth—are just figments of imagination. Money-worship in its concrete form, which is avarice, is almost unknown in America. Europeans love money *qua* money, as a potential piece of power; but if Americans "run after" the dollar, they do it merely to spend it. And one of the main reasons for spending the dollar is the enhancement of a social position, which, by the way, hard cash alone will never establish.

Here we meet headlong with the American myth of a "classless society," since the very essence of American life is a struggle for social recognition. This fact has been almost completely obscured by the American myth that Europe is fettered by a "class-system." As a matter of fact, modern Europe for some time has had a social mobility which is at least as pronounced as that of America. The classes in Europe are not castes and they used to be fed constantly with new blood, with new elements rising from lower layers. (Only today, in the republican era of Europe, the nobility is in the danger of becoming a caste since new titles outside of England and Belgium are not being created.) In America even a superficial scrutiny of the real-estate and "society" pages of any newspaper and, above all, of popular films and literature reveals plenty of class differentiation. (There is, needless to say, nothing intrinsically wrong about a class stratification as long as the classes are open, assimilating bodies animated by a spirit of generosity, ready to admit people of talent, character and tact.)

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THE myth of America's classless society is not unrelated to the myth of the "revolutionary" character of the United States. Nevertheless, it is Europe, not America, which is being convulsed by revolutions. There is no country on the Continent with the historical and legal continuity the United States can claim. The constitutions, the very symbols of our countries, change almost constantly. The writer of these lines, born a subject of Francis Joseph, has been through no less than five forms of government. In the *Métro* of Paris until recently a poster could be seen featuring four Mariannes proudly marching in a row, while a fifth, a tiny one, coyly looks around the corner. "The Republics come and go," the text said, "but Soudé paints remain forever!"

No, the United States, like Britain or Scandinavia, is *evolutionary,* whereas Europe is *revolutionary;* Europe is the continent of violent change and of an inordinate thirst for the radically new. America, luckily for our civilization, is conservative—conservative in her loyalties, tastes and institutions. Americans invariably view fundamentally new things with suspicion; it is the goods Americans are familiar with that they want to see in a bigger and better edition. This is also the reason why modern architecture, surrealist painting and strange political ideologies (unless they cleverly operate with American slogans) make little headway in the United States. This, moreover, explains the fact that American conservatives (and they form the bulk of the population) have always shied away from closer ties with Europe, which enjoyed the sympathy of merely small "radical" *avant-garde* American circles. This, finally, gives us a hint as to why it is so difficult in the United States to launch ideas which are not "regular" and why, in 1947, people preferred to drive around in old jalopies involving high repair bills rather than buy an "unknown" Kaiser-Frazer car, or why de Tocqueville's *De la démocratie en Amérique* still makes such good reading whereas Madame de Stael's book on Germany is merely of historic interest.

Americans are splendid competitors, but they are rarely "rugged individualists." Competition implies observance of set rules, of "games" commonly agreed to. Anarchists, not Communists, were until recently the aliens traditionally debarred fom landing in New York. Americans, like their "British brethren" (an expression borrowed from the Declaration of Independence), are not individualists like the Catholic peoples who went through the Renaissance, but "communitarians," leading primarily a social existence. The Anglo-Saxon in uniform or civvies, getting "out of hand" on the Continent, is drunk with the "anarchical" license of the Catholic world. Freed from the vigilance of his neighbors, the restraints of community life and the rigors of the "American Gothic," he often has difficulty in finding his bearings. Suffering from inhibitions which alcohol helps him to overcome at home, he meets a "New World" in the Old. There is, as D. H. Lawrence and E. D. Martin have pointed out, nothing "free and easy" about the American, who is a most serious, if not actually melancholic, human being.

A respecter of persons, opinions and institutions, the American is a firm believer in etiquette, external forms and fixed rules and a pious supporter of traditions and customs. How otherwise could he cling to the Common Law, which instantly would be subverted on the Continent? Far more history-minded than the European, endowed with a great enthusiasm for books on social behavior, with antique stores abounding all over his country, with historical markers on its roadsides, with genealogical societies and research workers in all his larger cities, with the family element prominent in all visual advertising, the American emerges as a man or woman totally different from his own mythological clichés about himself. Of course every nation breeds a "counter-type" to its true self—*vide*: Spain's Saint Ignatius, Britain's Byron and Denmark's Kierkegaard. Thus we also have with us the thick-skinned American cynic with the firm belief that a sucker is born every minute. Yet no role is less congenial to the American than that of the professional immoralist. America stands and falls with its idealism.

MOST detailed explanations why today "they" hate America in Europe are of a supplementary nature. The very heart of this truly crucial problem of our still-free world is the mental picture, the mythological portrait of America as a rootless, cold, calculating, utilitarian, "practical," heartless, purely commercial and uncivilized sub-Continent directed by "Wall Street" as a counterpart to the Kremlin. Yet this picture in too many ways resembles America's mythological concept of herself, and this, in turn, is the fitting complement to the American's mythological picture of a Europe held in bondage by kings, popes and bishops, of a continent ridden with serfdom, superstition and priestcraft, filth and degeneracy, deceit and backwardness, reaction and class arrogance.

Wilhelm Röpke, Europe's great Christian liberal, has wisely pointed out that nations communicate through their élites only. Men like de Tocqueville, Acton, Bryce and Keyserling have understood and appreciated America. Americans like George Ticknor, James F. Cooper, Geoffrey Bourne and Henry Adams have loved and comprehended Europe. They have shown that men rising above themselves and endowed with a sovereign outlook are able to build that much needed bridge between the continents. And a true alliance between America and Europe, an alliance of their hearts, is only possible if truth triumphs and the mythological mirages have been dissolved.

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The Homeless And the Housed

THE accomplishments of the young Israeli people in the space of a few short years are astounding. Even Israel's bitterest critics will admit that. What the Israelis have built has been the result of hard work, ambition, a driving belief in the destiny of the new State, technical and industrial know-how (unmatched in the Middle East) and native ingenuity.

"We have shown," one of Israel's political leaders told us, "that Jews can be peasants and artisans as well as anyone else. People thought that we were only a race of scholars, businessmen and professional people. But, look, here in Israel we have produced something new in the modern world—a Jewish peasant. We are extremely proud of our peasants and our mechanics and artisans; more proud, I think, than we are even of our great professors, doctors, lawyers and literary men. After all, the world always knew that Jews made good scholars, good businessmen and good artists. But who would have thought that we would turn out to be such good farmers?"

Another spokesman said proudly that after the British left Palestine there was practically no one left who knew anything about running a railroad. But within two weeks an Israeli railroad was in full operation. Men with Ph.D.'s learned to be engineers and firemen almost overnight and were happy to serve as they were needed.

When you start to think about Israel, you have to keep all this accomplishment in mind and remember that many people in Israel have surprised even themselves by learning what they can do. You have to remember, too, who these people are, what backgrounds many of them come from. Here are the people who only a few years ago were marked for annihilation by the Nazis. In many cases their mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers died in concentration camps. They themselves were driven from one part of Europe to another, with death never far behind. There are young adults in present-day Israel who spent their childhood in Dachau, Buchenwald and other horror camps and who spent months and even years in DP camps even after the war was over. You simply cannot begin to understand Israel without considering the Jewish tragedy of the Hitler decade.

Now, at long last, there is a Jewish homeland, an Israel. People once marked for death joyously reach out for life here. People who grew up in concentration camps feel that, being here, they have much to live for. People who were branded as inferior and shamed before the world can now hold their heads high, point to a good land and call it their own. Would that this were the end of the story!

ISRAEL would indeed represent a happy ending if it were not for the tragic fact that because there is an Israel another group of refugees has been created. Other men and women in Palestine must now live in tents and cry out bitterly to their own God for justice and revenge, as the Jews of Europe did just a decade ago. The fate of the Arab refugees certainly is not as terrible as that visited on the Jews during the Nazi persecutions. But still it too is heartbreaking.

I know that many Americans minimize the Arab refugees' plight and hold that they have only themselves and their leaders to blame. But all the talk in the world like this cannot obscure the fact that people who had homes no longer have them and now live in camps where they are treated as "problems." The fact that the Arab homes were mere "slums" (as I heard them described in Israel), or that the Arabs in the refugee camps "never had it so good as they do now on UN rations" (as I also heard) or that they are "lazy, improvident and hopelessly backward" (still another charge)—even if true—would not change that essential fact, either.

Israel as a nation can never feel secure in the political world as long as the Arab "refugee problem" remains unsolved. More than that, I suspect the Israelis as a people who above all others have known what it is to suffer will never be at peace with themselves until the refugees have received justice. That is one dominant impression I take away from Israel. As long as the refugees remain in their camps they are like a finger pointing shame at Israel. You won't find people admitting this, of course. You will sense a defensive spirit, almost belligerent, and hear all kinds of defamatory things about these Arabs from some in Israel; others will express their genuine concern for the refugees and add that responsibility for their plight rests on the Arab leaders; others will say that the Arab countries should *do* something about them, talking almost as if the refugees left homes everywhere but in Israel. But no matter what the reaction is, the tell-tale note of a guilt feeling is there.

Two-thirds of Israel's arable land is owned by Arab "absentees" (which means refugees). One-third of the new immigrants to Israel and one-fourth of the total population of Israel live in houses which belong to the "absentees." Over ten thousand Israeli shops and business places are the property of refugee Arabs. Just

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about all Israel's olive groves and half its citrus groves belong to the Arabs now classified as refugees.

Israel has accepted some seven hundred thousand new immigrants since the refugees fled five years ago. About half of these were Jews from Iraq and other Arab states. Whenever the problem of Arab property in Israel comes up, Israeli spokesmen point this out, quite justly and pertinently, it seems to me. The Arab answer, of course, is that these Jews didn't come to Israel until after the Palestinian Arabs had been driven out of Israel. When you tell the Arabs that the Israeli spokesmen say: "If they would only take care of their refugees the way we take care of ours," the Arabs remark bitterly that it is easy to "take care" of people when you have the "appropriated" property of almost a million other people to distribute.

THERE is a beauty and wonder in the whole idea of Israel which even the outsider feels. And that is why, it seems to me, that there is such poignant tragedy in the fact that the nation must be built largely on "appropriated" property. How, for instance, can one take full joy in seeing a happy Israeli family, even one which was almost snatched from the grave, when he knows there is another Arab family huddled in a leaky tent a few miles away because the Israeli family has found security? The glory of Israel is tarnished by this inescapable and bitter irony.

You feel that you don't want to blame anyone or add any more bitterness to the world than is already in it. You understand how the Jewish family feels. You have some idea of their desperation; you sense some of their satisfaction in actually "belonging," as they do in Israel. But the devilish part of it is that you can have some insight too into how the Arab family feels and surmise what it is like to see the years passing one after another with children growing up in a refugee camp while strangers live in one's house, pick one's fruit and call one's village their own.

If you stay on one side of the truce line, the problem is not quite so poignant. You can stay with the Arabs, for instance; you can visit their camps, stand with them and look across at their property. Then the strangers who now act at home there remain vague figures. You can see them with the Arabs' eyes. You can feel almost as bitter about them as the Arabs themselves do. But cross over into Israel and meet those strangers face to face and they become full-blooded people, no longer shadowy abstractions. You learn perhaps that they came from Germany. Maybe they tell you about some ghastly experience in a concentration camp. They talk about the relatives who were sent to the great Hitler ovens. They spell out their dreams for the future, their contentment with the present and their remembered horror of the past. You understand them, you think, and you open your hearts to them. But a few miles away, there are the refugees in their camps, still there. If you had not visited them, *they* might be only vague abstractions and, in your sympathy for the Jewish family, you might lose sight of the fact that Arabs are human beings with the same rights and aspirations as the appealing people who have taken over their property.

This essentially is the human situation in this part of the world, as opposed to the political factors. History, after all, does not operate in a vacuum; it works on people. If one is sufficiently partisan he might be able to come up with rounded, intellectually satisfying solutions to every political problem like this one. But when your concern is with the human aspects of a political problem, so-called, with no tidy separation of good guys and bad guys, there is a certain hesitation before making pronouncements. Still it may be some contribution just to get people thinking about the problem in essentially human terms.

JOHN COGLEY.

THE STAGE

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS MR. FERRER

AT City Center, amid a noisy farrago of publicity, clamorous popular attention and critical cooing, Mr. José Ferrer has recently concluded a winter season of drama. Mr. Brooks Atkinson has suggested a vote of thanks; the atmosphere on West Fifty-fifth Street is exuberant. I do not imagine one sour *nay* will disturb the complacency which has enfolded this entire program, but some protest, however small and ill-tempered, must be registered against the vanity and mindlessness which one might have read at every juncture of Mr. Ferrer's enterprise.

The repertoire comprised four plays—Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac," Joseph Kramm's "The Shrike," Shakespeare's "Richard III" and "Charley's Aunt"—and I do not think professional work so coarse and unreflective has been seen in New York for some years. Mr. Ferrer's productions were so inadequate and distorted that they had the (perhaps salutary) effect of forcing us to define again the elementary impulses which lie behind theatrical presentation. The traditional view, I take it, maintains that production involves both

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a completion and a release: the completion of a partial imaginative conception, and a release of the theatrical life which is, on paper, held in suspension. Given these criteria, it is obvious that the very *choice* of plays at City Center involved a limitation of interest and achievement. May, for instance, "Charley's Aunt," Brandon Thomas' stale Brazil nut, be said to reveal any traces of life whatever? I think not. Nor can one find much more to say for "The Shrike," Joseph Kramm's strident exposé of psychiatric wards, which unaccountably seduced the Pulitzer Committee some seasons back. A shrill and monotonous melodrama, "The Shrike" meanly traps its audiences into corrosive emotions from which there is no legitimate escape. What "moral" it is supposed to point, I cannot say—except perhaps the simple truth that you had better be awfully careful whom you marry because she is apt to get up some morning, like the lady in Mr. Thurber's fable, and announce sourly: "You are a booby, and I am going to put you in the booby hatch." Like that unhappy female, however, Mr. Kramm counted his boobies before they were hatched; there *was* a unicorn in Mr. Thurber's garden, but there is no play in Mr. Kramm's.

The theatrical life in plays like "Cyrano" and "Richard III" is, of course, much more various and complex, and vastly more susceptible to crippling or extinction. Mr. Ferrer sent both works out into the City Center air hamstrung and gasping. For all its effusion of rhetoric and sentiment, "Cyrano de Bergerac" is a tough and resourceful drama, of considerable beauty. Its language is capable at times of a profound luster and delicacy. City Center's production had the poise and texture of a suet pudding, decorated with Mr. Ferrer's hollow, windy colloquy and the trivial chirping of Miss Arlene Dahl ("she's lovely, she's engaged, she uses Pond's").

Since "Richard III" is infrequently staged, it provoked considerable interest, but the Shakespeare in this case proved quite as unnerving as the Rostand. The play, to begin, offers a cruel challenge: it is brilliant but unfinished, a sketch for later work rather than something fully wrought. Mr. Ferrer and his company missed entirely its harsh, gritty boldness, the subtlety and cold musical power of its rhetoric. Only Kendall Clark impressed briefly, though Jessie Royce Landis, Douglas Watson, Philip Huston and Margaret Wycherly showed heroic taste considering the circumstances. With a painful disregard for credibility and pictorial effect, Miss Margaret Webster staged the play hysterically: as if City Center had been confused in her mind with Grand Central Station on Christmas Eve. It was a dismal enterprise, this "Richard III," and illustrated with terrible accuracy the inadequacy of prevailing modes of Shakespearian production.

Which brings us to Mr. Ferrer. I have observed this actor for approximately a decade now, and recall (with pleasure) his shrewd, intelligent Iago, his resplendent postwar Cyrano, but also (with displeasure) all the rapid attritions of his recent career. I can think of no more pointed, Bunyanesque allegory of the corruptions of human success. There is a curious impression abroad that Mr. Ferrer is a great actor—an impression in which he is happy to concur, but which each of his appearances effectively demolishes. Better still, Mr. Ferrer is regarded as a "great man of the theater"—but it is a strange judgment which equates vulgarity and a frantic display of energy with achievement. No performer of our time has enjoyed such critical favor, or abused it so tastelessly.

Must the City Center be marked off then as an irredeemable loss? That would be a melancholy conclusion, but the present exhibition has certainly done little to mitigate it. Yet I cannot imagine how much longer a theater like this will be able to function without a point of view, or a program, or any notable imaginative resource. We have heard much about the financial sacrifices Mr. Ferrer and his associates made to "do" the season at the Center, about the difficult conditions of rehearsal under which they operated, and so forth: in brief, many cheap appeals have been aimed at our indulgence. Yet no one, to the best of my knowledge, has questioned the assumption that it is better to have an intolerable "Richard" or a distorted "Cyrano" than none at all, or that an officially sanctioned dramatic enterprise, in which the people of this city are somehow supposed to take pride, may be legitimately subordinated to the vanity of one performer. These assumptions are hereby questioned. Mr. Ferrer has made money for City Center—no one will deny that— and there is surely nothing wrong with money. But what has happened to the Center in the process? And who is to dictate policy now? For what the recent season emphasized, with a forceful clarity, was the simple fact that the kind of intelligence behind City Center's current activity is a threat.

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

"EDUCATION AND CHRISTIAN CULTURE"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Mr. Christopher Dawson's article in The Commonweal, "Education and Christian Culture" [December 4, 1953] has as its thesis that the study of Christian culture should form the basis of Catholic higher education. The Christian culture must be studied, he holds, "for it is only through this study that we can understand how Western culture came to exist and what are the essential values for which it stands." That is to say, " . . . anyone who wishes to

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understand our own culture as it exists today cannot dispense with the study of Christian culture whether he is a Christian or not."

Mr. Dawson's thesis, and the reason he assigns for it, are, I take it, self-evidently true once proposed so lucidly, and out of so vast a learning as their author commands.

But the particular educational embodiment which Mr. Dawson would give his proposal deserves discussion. The educational technique which he suggests is "a cooperative study of Christian philosophy, Christian literature and Christian history." But, "above all, it is necessary to study the three main phases of the Christian Culture: (1) its origins in the age of the Fathers and in the Christian Empire; (2) its development in the so-called Middle Ages when Christian Culture achieved classical form in the philosophy of Saint Thomas and Saint Bonaventure, the poetry of Dante and the art of the Gothic cathedral, and (3) its flowering in the vernacular cultures and literatures down to the 17th century." Mr. Dawson adds, "This no doubt seems an ambitious program. . . . " It does. But the flaw does not lie there. It lies here: that *this program is not ambitious enough.*

If, as Mr. Dawson correctly holds, there can be no understanding of contemporary Western culture without an understanding of its Christian past, is it not equally true that there can be no understanding of the Christian culture without an understanding of *its* Graeco-Roman past? Does Basil, or Jerome, or Augustine make sense without the Roman background? Can the second part of the *Summa Theologica* be read intelligently where there is no *Nicomachean Ethics?* Is the Christian demonstration of the existence of God even valid without the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle? What does natural law mean where the Roman Stoics, and behind them, the Greek tragedian, Sophocles, are absent?

Granted that medieval Christendom is the context of Dante, is not Virgil his background? And is there a Virgil where there is no Homer? Christian culture could not have been without its Graeco-Roman origins. Can it then be understood where there is no understanding of those origins?

Mr. Dawson's reason for the study of Christian culture is, naturally and properly, to understand contemporary Western culture. Now it is true that one cannot understand the secular present without understanding its Christian past. But it does not follow from this that if one understands the earlier Christian culture that he will therefore understand the present secular culture. One does not understand the present *simply* through understanding the past, even though he will never understand the present *without* understanding the past. To understand the Christian culture of the first sixteen centuries of the Christian era one must understand more than its Graeco-Roman origins. Similarly, to understand contemporary Western culture, it is necessary to understand more than its Christian origins. One must study it in itself as well as in its origins.

If these reflections on Mr. Dawson's notable suggestion be valid, then it seems to follow that the proper object of study in Catholic higher education is indeed Christian culture, but Christian culture not only in itself (the Fathers to the 17th century) but also in its origins (Graeco-Roman culture) and in its ambiguous successor (contemporary Western culture). At least one Catholic institution of higher learning in the United States has been operating its Liberal Arts Curriculum on that conviction for five years. I refer to Manhattan College.

The revised Liberal Arts Program at Manhattan is based on the following principles: 1) that liberal knowledge is the proper perfection of the intellect, as health is the proper perfection of the body and as virtue is the proper perfection of the will; 2) that liberal knowledge is, therefore, like health and virtue, a good to be sought for its own sake; 3) that it is true that certain advantages, religious, moral, social, professional, accrue to the man of liberal knowledge, but that these advantages, however real and valuable, are still only incidentally connected with liberal knowledge; so that 4) liberal knowledge must be sought chastely, without confusing its essential nature with its incidental advantages.

In order to transpose liberal knowledge into a workable undergraduate curriculum, however, Manhattan found it necessary to elaborate further, and more specific, principles, namely: 1) that the term "liberal knowledge" is substantially identical with the intellectual and artistic achievements of Western culture; that is, that the heritage of liberal knowledge *is* the heritage of the West (hence, "The Heritage of Western Culture" became the general theme of Manhattan's revised Liberal Arts Program); 2) that liberal knowledge comprises, and is comprised in, religion, philosophy, history, literature, the fine arts, science and mathematics; 3) that the most advantageous method of communicating this liberal learning of the West is to invite the student to recapitulate in his own intellectual experience the intellectual experience of the West, that is, to present liberal knowledge as it was actually achieved—historically.

Once these principles, general and specific, are granted, the basic structure of Manhattan's Arts Curriculum follows from them. It is a four-year course devoted to the study of the religion, the philosophy, the history, the literature, the fine arts, the mathematics and the science of the West. These liberal or humanistic achievements are, to the degree that they can be studied historically, called "theme courses" (history, philosophy, literature, art and, in a unique sense, religion); and, to the degree they do not readily lend themselves to historical presentation, are included under the "non-theme courses" (mathematics, science, language).

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Consistently with the principle of historical presentation there is studied in the freshman year the thought (philosophy), the deeds (history), the loves and aspiration (literature) of Greece and Rome, and the incarnation of these in matter (art). In the sophomore year the same facets of medieval Christendom are examined. In the junior year the same four aspects of the West of the Renaissance and the Reformation and the National States are presented. In the senior year the post-Napoleonic world, the world which Mr. Dawson has well named "The Revolution," is investigated from the four-fold point of view.

In this way the over-all unit of study has become Western culture, or liberal knowledge itself. The immediate unit of study each year is a given historical phase of that culture. A "course" or a "subject" has become meaningless except as related to man's progressive discovery of the implications of his manhood under God. The danger of cultural relativism, implicit in such a program, is counteracted by the courses in theology (still, regrettably, called "religion") and in Thomistic philosophy presented, not historically, but systematically. These two ruling disciplines supply those principles, revealed and rational, in the light of which the student may evaluate man's achievements.

. . . In these harsh days a new Christian culture is being conceived. We must cherish the study of this cruel, beloved present for the sake of the new Christendom to which it shall, in God's time, but not without our intelligently, lovingly directed effort, give birth. And when that Christendom dawns, it will no longer be the Christendom merely of the West, but at last of the world. Should it, however, be unconscious of the work of such a Westerner as Mr. Dawson, then it will be less rich than one would have hoped.

JAMES V. MULLANEY.

OF NOTE

ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM

IN the current *Cross Currents* (3111 Broadway, New York City 27), Editor Erwin W. Geissman discusses the problem of anti-intellectualism in America, particularly the problem of anti-intellectualism in the American Catholic community. Identifying the "simplist" as a person who refuses to acknowledge complexity in problems, who "supposes that all issues can be resolved by a common-sense application of theological and moral formulas," Mr. Geissman goes on to say:

The intellectual should constitute the balance and the maturity of the Catholic community. Rightly, much more is expected of him in the way of understanding and tolerance. The danger is that in his annoyance at the intellectual orthodoxy of the simplist, the intellectual will set up an orthodoxy of his own and relegate the simplist to heresy. Something like this has already begun to happen among Catholic intellectuals. Their positions are more tenable, but no more uniquely Catholic than those of the simplists. The assumption that the Catholic intellectual will necessarily hold certain opinions on politics and social problems is a regrettable one. It would be ironic if the final triumph of the simplist is his conversion of the intellectual to an essentially simplist position.

The problem of the student is especially difficult. Perhaps the most remarkable development in the Church of our time is the willingness of sizable numbers of young Catholic laymen to study Catholicism seriously and to be prepared to devote themselves to the cause of Christ and the Church. This situation is without precedent since Apostolic times. It will be the great scandal of the Church of our age if this tremendous treasury of enthusiasm and devotion is permitted to go to waste or to spend itself in misdirection. Yet just this is in process of happening. The students most worth our attention are the very ones who only too frequently find that the serious religious instruction they crave is nowhere available for them, that the Catholic college has no vital religious or liturgical life answerable to their needs. They go out into the world to waste themselves on eccentricities because at the center of the Catholic community they find neither sympathy nor welcome. Worst of all they lack the maturity to see the true complexity of the social problem, and too frequently they themselves grow suspicious and bitter. It is a savage irony that the very learning they acquire in a Catholic environment may serve to detach them from the Catholic community.

The responsibility for this lies squarely with the educated simplists of the community. The serious-minded student who has been assured for years that there is something specifically Catholic about the simplist's positions is in for a rude awakening in any honestly administered Catholic college classroom. It is the Catholic intellectual who must swallow his pride and make charitable answer to the pathetic question, "Why have they lied to me all these years?" Do it he must, for his function is to build, not to destroy. Petty feuding ought to be beneath the capabilities of the intellectual. The simplist is only wrong; the compromising intellectual is both wrong and in apostasy from his own principles. . . .

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The Body and the World

MY FRIENDS THE SENSES. By Charles-Damian Boulogne. Translated by Jane Howes. Foreword by Gerald Vann. Kenedy. $3.

By GARY MacEOIN

BETWEEN the moralists and the amoralists, the body has been having a bad time for the past couple of hundred years. The pendulum has swung from a Puritanism correlating physical satisfaction with sin to a hedonism that identifies sense pleasure with happiness. The emphasis of the practical sciences on sense perception has not served as a corrective. Unconcerned with the message of things in themselves, they see them only as objects of pursuit and possession, of commerce and research.

In *My Friends the Senses* Father Boulogne, a French Dominican, shows how much of the beauty and wonder of life we are losing by this neglect. With a minimum of comment on the extremes of sensualism and Manicheism, he analyzes the senses as the tools by which the human person establishes contact with reality on all levels, physical, intellectual and spiritual.

His book is a poem to be savored rather than a treatise to be studied. It is very easy to read, though often with the deceptive simplicity of deep truths, the full import of which sinks in only gradually. Each sense is discussed separately, first those which grasp from afar, seeing, hearing and smell; then those that make direct contact, touch and taste. Finally, the analysis moves on to the operation of all the senses, the body in action, in movement, in play and sport, and in dancing.

Nothing emerges that is not obvious, and yet many things emerge which one normally overlooks or neglects. Memorable insights are provided into the function of the senses in esthetic and artistic activity. Quotable comments abound, whether the author is talking about light, sleep, mothers, perfume, the hands of the surgeon, bull fighting, lion taming, good taste, or the marriage act.

Perfume, for example, is for a woman more than an ornament; it is a projection of her personality. "Perfume is the only ally on which a woman can fully count. It permits her to attract without losing her reserve, to unveil herself while keeping her modesty, to impose herself without importuning, to insist without wearying, and above all, to express herself without giving away her mystery."

Or dancing. "Dancing is the incarnation of beauty and grace—beauty and grace which are, it is true, expressed by the body, but which do not exist solely for the glorification of the body. Not that the dance ever ceases to be physical. But just as the flame transfigures and exalts the wood on which it feeds and the substance from which it springs, so dancing reclothes the body living it with a movement and a splendor of the face, a grace, suppleness, and completeness of the limbs and head and shoulders which are no longer seen in themselves: dancing has transformed them into unmistakable symbols of a more subtle, ethereal beauty where the mind, no less than the senses, finds delight."

This cheerful, wide-awake meditation on the human body and the world to be discovered through its senses is recommended particularly to educators.

A Moscow Diary

RUSSIAN ASSIGNMENT. By Leslie C. Stevens. Little, Brown. $5.75.

By H. A. REINHOLD

THE modest author would probably object, but this is a great book. In the form of a diary Admiral Stevens describes his three years of service as U.S. Naval attaché in the Moscow Embassy and conveys as no one else I know the atmosphere of the Russian capital. There is nothing sensational in this book. It commends itself, because of its quiet humor, its kindness, its modesty and its patience, as a true picture of Russian life. Not for a second does the author lose his sane and calm judgment, and at all times one can see his dignity as the representative of his country. On the other hand, there is no swaggering, no offensive superiority, and nothing of that narrow super-patriotism that offends the host. The book is full of facts, no guesses, no statistics, but just what the eye has seen and the ear has heard, passed through a sieve of intelligent discernment.

It is the way the story is told which makes this book my favorite. Only a man sure of his own convictions, a wise and intelligent man, a kind-hearted man, could live in an atmosphere of chicanery, petty irritations and stupid autocracy without painting a picture all black. Here is a cultured man who shows that he wants to learn more and who speaks with restraint in a world shrill with propaganda. Wherever this well-read man, full of ingratiating intellectual curiosity, sees something good he says so, as in his appraisal of the theater and historic buildings, but nothing sham fools him. It is a book full of the truly American compassion and fairness which used to be our greatest asset in the world, and I think the State Department should distribute translations abroad and read the best chapters over the air to the Russians. The author is unhesitatingly critical of Communism and all its horrors, but has a kind word for Russian kindness and a humorous quip when Russians are ridiculous.

This book in its rich color has the smell of authenticity and raises the question whether its message is not just what would cure people from hysteria and megalomania. I am sure intelligent Russians, once they had the doors locked and the telephone covered, could only speak of Admiral Stevens with warm respect, and wonder how a military establishment, a capitalist one at that, could produce so urbane and so

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just a man as this. He may have sowed more doubts in many closed totalitarian minds by being himself and behaving like a man and a Christian than the most strident voices of explanation, accusation and ridicule. The State Department is to be congratulated because of him.

Adolescence

CRESS DELAHANTY. By Jessamyn West. Harcourt, Brace. $3.75.

By T. E. CASSIDY

A LASS with the lovely but unlikely name of Crescent Delahanty is the focal subject of a series of lovely sketches, all related but each distinct, by the always skillful Jessamyn West. Cress goes from her twelfth to her sixteenth year, experiencing joys and sorrows, laughter and tears, in all kinds of situations. But one thing is constant: she is always in her own private world, even though she does, as Mrs. Delahanty moistly notes, "recapitulate" her father. In determining to become popular in school, she makes a list of things she must have or do in order to be popular. (Her father was and is a great lister, too.) Her success is mixed: she achieves it, but it is not quite what she wanted. This sketch, by the way, is the best in the book, along with the last one concerning the death of her grandfather, when Cress, a young lady now, found herself returned to an understanding of true and lasting love.

Anyone who knows adolescence, and especially that of young girls, will love this book. It is beautifully written, with the most extraordinary insight and delicacy. The adult world moves around and above Cress, but it never really intrudes. It arrives, to be sure, but the two worlds are complementary. Jessamyn West is one of our most gifted writers, and the tenderness of *The Friendly Persuasion* and the sharp dramatic touches of *The Witch Diggers* are here, too, still mellow but still moving. Miss West, without sound and fuss, gives you some characters, some scenes, some meaning. And she does it with wonderful ease, yet lots of force, laughter, and sighs.

Century of Stories

AN ANTHOLOGY OF FAMOUS AMERICAN SHORT STORIES. Edited by Angus Burrell and Bennett Cerf. The Modern Library. $2.45.

By JOHN COURNOS

THIS collection was originally published a dozen or so years ago as a "Bedside Book." Now, for the benefit of a larger public, the volume has been transformed into a Modern Library Giant, at a reasonable price. And a Giant it is, tipping the scales two pounds and eight ounces at my grocer's (an honest man, I believe), hardly the thing for the tired would-be sleeper. Here, beginning with Irving, Hawthorne and Poe, and ending with Irwin Shaw, Budd Schulberg and J. D. Salinger, are seventy-three

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stories making a volume totaling some thirteen hundred large pages. If this collection were divided into epochs, as it easily could, and perhaps should be, it would make four or five legitimate anthologies.

And that is the bewildering part of it, bewildering to the general reader, I mean. The student of the history of American literature should undoubtedly find this collection of inestimable value, for it illustrates in practical terms the development and progress (a dubious word here!) of the American short story in a little over a hundred years; for here are not only the changing mores but also, and above all, the changing language and styles of writing. But as far as the general reader is concerned, what is his reaction to this confusion of tongues, which responds to scarcely any law other than that of time? It is clear that the writers themselves would find themselves in the same predicament if they were to attempt to exchange comments and ideas. What, for example, would Dorothy Parker, author of "Big Blonde," say to the author of "The Great Stone Face"? Or Ring Lardner to Melville, whose great story, "Billy Budd," appears in this volume? Or Gertrude Stein, the author of "The Good Anna," to Edith Wharton, the author of "The Mission of Jane"? Ernest Hemingway may conceivably be in a position to exchange remarks with the author of "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," but Eudora Welty might find it hard going with a writer of the caliber of Mary E. Wilkins. The disunity of the past century is perhaps nowhere better illustrated. Many famous landmarks in the American short story are here. In any case, there is something in this volume to suit every taste.

Symbolic Sailing

THE WATERS OF THE END. Charles Ingle. Lippincott. $3.

By GEORGE MILES

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and although the author acknowledges the influence of E. E. Cummings, the story never succeeds in reaching a level of importance commensurate with these items. There is, indeed, little to recommend about this effort. The characters are unrealistic and unimpressive, and the narrative is a feeble and faltering thing. Outside of a weak hint that a sensitive personality is at work this flight of fancy never gets fully airborne.

In an excessively portentous fashion a young college student, former sailor, prepares to make a voyage in an old sailboat with his young brother and his cousin. The symbolic significance of the sailing is never realized and the reflections, conversations and complementary accidents promote a sentimental and a ridiculous situation. In addition, for some uncertain reason, the mother of the brothers, their grandmother and their uncle are described as they moon about the family house while the boys make ready for the boat trip. The parts of the story which deal with the older people are vacant and disjointed and they emphasize the feeling that the book has neither a beginning, a middle, or an end.

Orestes Brownson

THE SAILOR'S SNUG HARBOR: Studies in Brownson's Thought. By Thomas Ryan. Newman.

ORESTES Brownson is curiously neglected. As a writer, he wrote "strong, grand idiomatic English, pure as Newman's—with more imagination, perhaps" (as the President of Tufts College, C. H. Leonard, commented). As a human being, the French Count de Montalembert best summed him up: "My sympathy for your opinions and doctrines, so deep and so full, is still beneath my admiration for your manly truthfulness. You are a *man.*" Than which, indeed, it is hard to say fairer. Mr. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. has observed how Brownson was most truthful when he observed of himself "I deny that I have *changed,* though

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I own that I seem to myself to have *advanced.*" And Brownson's own comment, "there are few who do not worship their creed with more devotion than they do their God, and labor a thousand times harder to support it than they do to support the truth," is proof that he never mistook the trees for the wood.

Truth, indeed, was the lodestone of his passionate, argumentative, imprudent life. "Is not the hero always a soldier?" he asked, and could not imagine the "little man," meek Mr. Milquetoast, in that role. Next to truth, he loved liberty. "Liberty," he thundered, "is a right. But if there is no right, how can you defend liberty as a right? If liberty is not a right, no wrong is done in violating it, and tyranny is as lawful as freedom. Liberty *must* assert right, in the order of justice."

Father Ryan, in a dozen essays, studies various aspects of Brownson's thought, including his hatred, as a Catholic, for "two things, despotism and anarchy, the despot and the mob."

A.F.

The Columbia-Viking Desk Encyclopedia. William Bridgwater, Editor-in-Chief. Viking. $7.95.

THE editors of the justly famed one-volume Columbia Encyclopedia undertook a man-sized task to produce this eleven-hundred-page condensation. Frequent use of cross references to avoid repetition cuts it down to thirty-one thousand entries. The scholarly resources of Columbia University have played a big role in the compiling of this fair-minded and comprehensive book.

REVIEWERS

Gary MacEoin's autobiography, *Nothing Is Quite Enough*, was published last fall.

Father H. A. Reinhold, writer, anthologist, a leader in the liturgical movement, is pastor of Saint Joseph's Church in Sunnyside, Washington.

T. E. Cassidy is a critic whose home is in New York.

John Cournos, critic and anthologist, contributes to many literary magazines.

George Miles writes frequently on current books for this magazine.

To Occasional Readers

THE essay contest announced elsewhere in this issue is the first milestone in The Commonweal's thirtieth anniversary observance. The year just beginning is therefore a period during which it will be especially worthwhile to read The Commonweal week by week.

During the same period in such places as Washington and Berlin, at the United Nations and across the Pacific, decisions are in the making that will determine the course of our world. Illuminating comment on the news will be particularly useful.

In view of the articles by eminent authors on key questions which are scheduled for publication in The Commonweal in coming months, the magazine will be in a position to supply you with more good reading than ever. You will find that it pays you to subscribe. And one advantage of the attached trial offer is that it extends to you a saving of over forty per cent of the news stand price.

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